DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 102 697 EA 006 818

AUTHOR Hixon, L. B.
TITLE The Salaried Instructional/Supervisory Paraprofessional: Titles and Job Descriptions.
PUB DATE [73]
NOTE 8p.; Related documents are ED 081 091 and EA 006 817 and 819

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Job Analysis; *Occupational Information; *Paraprofessional School Personnel; *Professional Recognition; *Resource Staff Role; Supervision; Teacher Aides; *Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

In order to eliminate some of the titles assigned to paraprofessionals engaged in school instructional matters and to promote a degree of uniformity it is recommended that two types of title designations be recognized, both of which would permit two levels of classification. If the paraprofessional efforts, as written into job descriptions, are largely detail and subject to constant teacher supervision, either "Educational Aide" or "Supervisory Aide" would be the title designation. Should the job descriptions provide for leadership opportunities, some freedom of action, and responsibilities including involvement in instruction, counseling, and independent control of children, "Educational Associate" or "Supervisory Associate" is to be preferred. (Author/MLF)

ED102697

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The Salaried Instructional/Supervisory Paraprofessional: Titles and Job Descriptions

L. B. Hixon

A study, including 628 school districts, reveals that at least 49 different titles are assigned to paraprofessionals engaged in school instructional matters. Another 22 titles refer to supervisory paraprofessionals.[1] These titles range from the very general, as for example "paraprofessional", "school auxiliary", "school aide" and "teacher aide", to the more definitive such as "instructional materials aide", "team teaching associate", "study hall supervisor", and "playground aide." A proliferation of titles does exist and it would appear that no common pattern is in practice.

In order to eliminate some of the nomenclature and to promote a degree of uniformity, it is recommended that two types of title designations be recognized, both of which would permit two levels of classification. Each paraprofessional, so designated, would agree to pertinent job description stipulations at the point of accepting employment in the school district.

1. L. B. Hixon, The Status of Paraprofessionals in New York State School Districts (Bureau of Occupational Education Research, The State Education Department, Albany, New York, 1969), p. 7.

EA 006 818

Types and Classification

Instruction	Supervision
Educational Associate	Supervisory Associate
Educational Aide	Supervisory Aide

Educational Associate

With this title the paraprofessional will be expected, regularly or on occasion, to handle matters which are not necessarily detail in nature, and, with the immediate supervisor's approval, may become involved in the teacher's domain of professional responsibilities including, for example, instruction and counseling of pupils and assistance in teaching plan development. Inherent in the title is a confidence that the paraprofessional, under teacher leadership, can become deeply concerned in the actual instructional program.

This is an appropriate title in the instance where the paraprofessional works in "partnership" with one teacher. In this example a division of duties, partly professional and partly detail, is made between the teacher and her paraprofessional associate. The title might also apply to a paraprofessional who is a member of a team teaching unit and is decided upon by the team teachers as competent to fulfill certain duties, construed as primarily professional.

The decision to use this title in the job description and for a particular paraprofessional rests on the degree her involvement is to be expected in terms of professional prerogatives and, of course, as further translated through examination of background experience and training. If considerable embracement of professional duties is provided and expected of the para-

professional, this title is probably "best fit"; on the other hand, if the paraprofessional is to be heavily engaged in details, with very little professional incursion, then "educational aide" is more appropriate.

It is well to recognize that instructional paraprofessionals, in varying degrees, have heavily invaded the area of teacher concerns. The findings of a study completed in 1971 point to this conclusion.[2] Principals, teachers and paraprofessionals were requested to examine a list of 78 teacher responsibilities, ranging from details to highly professional matters. Surprisingly, all of the activities were reported as being actually performed by paraprofessionals, varying in percentages from a high of 90.2 to a low of 1.5. The conclusion becomes even more pronounced when a report of findings in Oregon is examined.[3] Herein it was discovered that paraprofessionals, in many instances, were teaching more than professionals, and teachers with paraprofessional aides were handling about the same amount of detail as teachers without aides. Even a moderate interpretation of these two studies engenders realization that there is need for recognition of the type of paraprofessional who is involved to a considerable degree in the more professional aspects of the educational process; this recognition implies title use of "Educational Associate."

2. L. B. Hixon, Role and Status of Teacher Aides in Selected New York State School Districts (SEARCH, Agriculture, Education 1, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, New York State College of Agriculture, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, May 1971) pp. 20-23.

3. Eaton H. Conent, A Cost-Effectiveness Study of Employment of Non-professional Teaching Aides in Public Schools (Bureau of Research, Office of Education, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare, March 1971), pp. 4, 34-35.

Educational Aide

This title applies to the paraprofessional whose duties are primarily detail management. In general, professional prerogatives, such as teaching, counseling and planning, are not permitted. If there is an occasional incursion into the the teacher's bailiwick, it is not common practice, becomes an exception rather than usual occurance. The paraprofessional works under a teacher or teachers in a situation where specific duties are assigned. In all probability the paraprofessional does not enter the larger educational scene except as permitted under special circumstances. In the strictest sense, the paraprofessional serves only to relieve teachers of duties which interfere with the chief functions of teaching.

There is no reason why the educational aide could not be promoted to educational associate if certain conditions are met. These are: (1) proven competence through training, experience and example, (2) opportunity and appropriate job description, and (3) desire on the part of the paraprofessional for that type of responsibility.

Supervisory Associate

It would be expected that this paraprofessional would act in pupil supervisory/control circumstances where she is primarily "on her own" and without constant supervision by a professional. An immediate supervisor would be available from whom overall direction and counsel should be expected, but day-to-day efforts and actions, for the most part, would assume independent paraprofessional volition and exercise of option. The decision to use this title would depend on the job description and paraprofessional capabilities in terms of training and experience with children.

Supervisory Aide

This paraprofessional performs in a pupil supervisory/control situation wherein a professional is near at hand to give directions and make the great majority of decisions. The role is primarily assistance to the professional. Supervisory functions are delegated to the paraprofessional by the professional. Among other stipulations in the job description, two duties are made specific: (1) the position constitutes assistance to professionals in supervisory matters; (2) the duties are delegated as decided by the immediate supervisors. The job description should contain a list of major supervisory areas with the further stipulation that the paraprofessional will carry out other supervisory duties as may appear and become necessary. A particularly appropriate use of this title is for the paraprofessional who assists a teacher in supervising a large number of children on a playground. Surveillance by more than one person is needed. The teacher is in general control and delegates duties to the paraprofessional as need arises.

Why "Educational Associate" and "Educational Aide?"

For several reasons the titles "Educational Associate" and "Educational Aide" are suggested in place of terms such as "Teacher Associate", "Teacher Assistant" and "Teacher Aide".

One reason is based on the recognition that these paraprofessionals serve as more than mere "vassals" of teachers. They operate in the total school setting. They are not and should not be considered subservient in the school situation. They are partners in the educational enterprise. It is true that through direction they often relieve teachers of details and quite often of unwanted and more professional duties. The fact is that they perform

important school functions, some of which are detail in nature -- and details are important -- as well as other functions which are of a more instructional nature. Why should they be considered as pawns of teachers when the evidence is that many, if not most, are concerned in the totality of instruction and learning?

As a second reason, these titles parallel terminology adopted by other professional groups, i.e., medicine and dentistry. Comparable paraprofessionals in the doctor's office are called "Medical Assistants"; in a dentist's office they become "Dental Assistants."[4] The basis of these titles appears to be the field of concern rather than the professional in charge. It is submitted that these titles do not detract from final professional authority but do presume a recognition of the paraprofessional's importance in the medical/dental setting. In addition the titles suggest flexibility in duty assignments, in broader context than as mere doctor or dentist aides.

A third reason is related to the rapid development of instructional paraprofessional programs in the junior colleges.[5] "Educational Associate" is noted as the most commonly used designation for these programs. Graduation, with this program as a concentration, implies competency sufficient for considerable involvement in school instruction and pupil contact, and infers ability, training and experience to handle school duties which are

4. Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Volume I, Definition of Titles, Third Edition (United States Department of Labor), pp. 461 and 193.

5. L. B. Hixon, New York State Junior College School Paraprofessional Programs (Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1972), pp. 5-7.

in addition to details. It could therefore be argued that the existence of these programs has at least an indirect bearing on the question at hand.

Job Description and Selection of Title

A great majority of chief school administrators (88.1 percent) recognize the need for paraprofessional job descriptions.[6] It is not, however, the purpose of this paper to make definitive suggestions concerning the process of composing job descriptions except as applied to the position titles.

If the paraprofessional efforts, as written into descriptions, are largely detail and subject to constant teacher supervision, either "Educational Aide" or "Supervisory Aide" would comprise the better title designation. Should the job descriptions provide for leadership opportunities, some freedom of action, and responsibilities including involvement in instruction, counseling and independent control of children, "Educational Associate" or "Supervisory Associate" is to be preferred.

6. L. B. Hixon, The Salaried Instructional Paraprofessional: Hierarchy and Nomenclature (Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1973), p. 34.